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A
LETTER to M^r. *HOW*,
By Way of R E P L Y
T O H I S
Confiderations
O F T H E
P R E F A C E
T O A N
Enquiry into the Occafional Conformity
of D I S S E N T E R S.

By the Author of the faid Preface and Enquiry.

L O N D O N :

Printed in the Year 1701.

A

LETTER to M^r H O W.

S I R,

AFTER such an Account as you have given of your self in the Five first Pages of your Book, with the Aversion you have to any thing which shou'd interrupt you in your more *Recluse* Studies; I presume no Man cou'd imagin you would break thorough your own Measures to attack a *poor Prefacer*, as you call me, and wholly quitting the Argument, amuse the World, and content your self to Lash the Author with the Severity of your Wit.

Herein, Sir, I must own, that not only your Opponent, but all the Town seem Disappointed exceedingly, that Mr. *How*, who thinks the Subject not worth Answering, shou'd trouble his Head, or spend his Time about the Impertinence of a *sorry Prefacer*.

When I Address'd the Preface to you, I thought I had so carefully Revis'd both it and the Book, that, as I mention'd to you, I cou'd no-where be

tax'd with Exceeding the Rules of Charity and Good Manners.

And tho' I wou'd always make them both my Rule, yet I thought my self oblig'd to it more now than ordinarily, by how much the person to whom, and the persons of whom I wrote, were equally known and very much valued by me; and I did not question but I shou'd either not be Repli'd to at all, or it wou'd be done with the Charity of a *Christian*, the Civility of a *Gentleman*, and the Force and Vigour of a *Scholar*.

But since it seems good to you, Sir, to descend so far below your self as to quit the Dispute offer'd, and fall upon me personally, and to mix Raillery and Reproach with your Argument, *which, I am sure, you know too well to think betters the Cause*: You must blame your self, Sir, for Obliging me in my own Defence to be a little freer with you than otherwise I shou'd have thought had become me.

Nor, Sir, shou'd I have engag'd with you, even in my own Defence, knowing I am to struggle with so unequal a Match both as to your Learning and Reputation, had I not seen your Book differ so much from your Constant Character; and pardon me, Sir, for the Word, *in many places from the Truth*.

And since I am oblig'd thus publickly to Animadvert upon my Superiors, for such I own you to be both in Learning and Office,

I shall

I shall ask your Leave to lay down several Mistakes, upon which I must be allow'd to suppose you have gone in the Censures which you have made; which Suppositions I draw from the whole Tenour of your Writing.

I presume, Sir, that you are mistaken in these Four Points, in the *Person, Temper, Profession, and Intention* of the Author.

Which Mistakes, I shall venture to suppose, are the Reasons which moved you to treat your Adversary with so much indecent Contempt.

As to my Person and Temper: 'Tis true, Sir, I have chosen to conceal my Name; and though, bating Human Frailty, Sins and Misfortunes, I know no Reason why the Argument should be asham'd of the Author, or the Author of the Argument: Yet when I consider'd how constant a practice it is in the World to Answer an Argument with Recriminations instead of Reasonings, I thought it best to continue retir'd, that the Case I had enter'd upon might not come clogg'd with the dead Weight of the Meanness and Imperfections of the Author.

I need not go back to the Instance of our Saviour, whose Arguments were Confronted with the Contempt of that Question, *Is not this the Carpenter's Son?* For I find that even Mr. How himself

self wou'd have search'd my Character to have compleated his Remarks with Personal Reflections.

And yet I cannot imagine what Relation my Name has to the Argument; it cou'd be only useful to furnish you with something in my Character to Reproach me with; which, *God knows, you might have found enough of.*

But what wou'd all this be to the Point in hand? The Occasional Conformity of Dissenters is not Condemn'd or Defended by the Names of Authors on either side, but by Truth, Scripture, and Reason.

Thou wast altogether born in Sin, says the High-Priest, and the Elders of the Sanhedrim to the Poor Man whom Christ had heal'd; *and doest thou teach us?* And yet the poor Man was in the Right; and if I am so, though I was the meanest and most scandalous of Sriblers, is my Argument the worse?

But, Sir, to Answer all those Particulars, and let you know that I am not altogether so shy of my Name as you imagine, I shall give you a Genuine honest Account of my self, and then my Name is at your Service.

First, Sir, I am to tell you, that I am, and acknowledge my self to be, possess'd with a strong Aversion to Doubling and Shifting in Points of Reli-

Religion ; and do think that the Case in hand is to be allow'd no less : and therefore wrote the Enquiry with Two very honest Designs ; viz. To see if by Strength of Argument I cou'd receive Satisfaction ; And to Explode, and, as far as in me lies, to Oppose the Practice.

Secondly, Had your Book given me, or any body else that I can meet with, *whose Judgment is to be valued*, the Satisfaction I desir'd ; I assure you, I am so little fond of an Opinion, because it is mine, that I shou'd not have been asham'd to have own'd my self mistaken ; and possibly have shewn as much Humiliaty in Acknowledging it, as you think I have Pride in Opposing.

As to Personal Miscarriages and Misfortunes, of which no Man has more, and which, perhaps, may weaken the Reputation of the Author, but I am sure ought not of my Argument : To them I shall only say, *God in his Merciful Providence has heal'd the Last, and, I hope, has pardon'd the First* : And if so, I am upon even Terms in point of Reasoning.

By this you may see I am sensible of the Beam in my own Eye, and have for some years taken up the part of a Penitent on that very account ; but did never understand that thereby I was barr'd from Enquiring into what I judg'd Scandalous to the Profession of a Party in General, of whom, *though unworthy*, I was a Member.

Nor,

Nor, Sir, am I any-where guilty of Judging another, where the Case is not so plain, as that it really seems to speak it self: For I must remember also, that we are no more to call Good, Evil, or Evil, Good, than we are to Judge one another.

Thus, Sir, I am gone over my own Character; and shall only demand this from you of Right, That, so far as Truth and Honesty is on my side, it may not, nor ought not to be despis'd for being usher'd in by an unworthy Instrument.

And 'tis strange, Sir, that you who Animadvert upon me for Judging, should so severely judge me, and that wrongfully too, as shall appear in the Particulars of this short Discourse.

I cou'd not be satisfi'd to say less to this Point on these Accounts, because I must put in a *Caveat* against Personal Reflections as unfair in the Dispute: He that pleases first to Confute the Argument, is welcome to show his Wit in Satyrizing upon the Follies and Afflictions of the Author: And there I leave it, and proceed to what I conceive is your Third Mistake about me.

Viz. My Profession. And this you seem to make plain, while from the 13th, to the 24th Page, you treat me as an Independent, and spend your Time to Reply to the particular Tenents in dispute between You and Them; which, with Submission, I conceive to be nothing at all to the purpose.

After

After this, P. 30, 31, 32, I am talk'd with as a *Fifth-Monarchy-man*, and a *Leveller*; what of these Principles any where appears in the Enquiry, I confess I am at a loss to know; nor, Sir, have you been so kind to lay it down.

Indeed I own my self somewhat surpriz'd to see you run on in Answering the scrupulous Independent about *Kneeling at the Sacrament*, and the Extravagant *Fifth-Monarchy-man*, about seizing the Properties of Mankind for the Use of the Saints; and such things as these, by way of Reply to an *Enquiry about Occasional promiscuous Conformity*: and am still at a Loss to find an Antecedent to this Relative.

I assure you I am no *Independent*, nor *Fifth-Monarchy-man*, nor *Leveller*. You have shown your Learning, Sir, and Confuted an Error inconsistent with Civil Society: Very well; but this had been better done by it self; it had no more relation to the Case in hand, than a Lecture against the *Alchoran*; and you might as well conjecture me to be a *Mahometan*, as a *Fifth-Monarchy-man*, from any thing in the Book that looks like either. But, Sir, since I am led by you to give an account of my Profession, which, I hope, I shall always be ready to do; I shall do it in few words: That I am of the same Class, and in the same Denomination of a Dissenter with your self, your Office excepted, and am willing to be guided by, and to practise the Great Rule of Christian Charity in all the pro-

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per and legal Extents of it : Indeed I have more need to practise it than you , because I stand more in need of it from others, with respect to the Causes already nam'd. And however, by wresting Words, and mistaking my Intentions, you are pleas'd to see nothing of it ; I am not yet convinc'd that I have broken that Great Christian Rule of Charity, in any thing I have written.

I come now to the Fourth Thing in which you are mistaken, which is in my *Intentions* ; in which you rashly, and, I assure you, wrongfully judge me, however cautious you wou'd have me be of judging others : But, Sir, *Humanum est Errare* ; you are no more Infallible, I see, than I, and are fallen into the same rash Error you Reprove me for with so much Severity ; by judging, that the principal Design of this Book was to reflect upon a Worthy Gentleman, who is nam'd in the Preface : And in one place you are pleas'd to join me with the Party who Oppos'd him, and bring me in making my Court to them.

All these, Sir, I shall make appear to be not only Mistakes, but groundless Mistakes ; such as nothing but the same Thoughts which put you out of Temper, cou'd lead you into : And I can solemnly Appeal in the Form you have set down, that you have wrong'd me in your Censure.

First, Sir, the *Enquiry* was publish'd Three years ago, and therefore cou'd not be design'd as a Personal

sonal Inveſtive againſt the Gentleman you ſpeak of : All that can be ſaid, is, That the Cauſe being again given, the Re-printing it was deſign'd as a Reproof to the Practice : and ſo much I own. As for *Persons*, I am indifferent ; *if the Coat fits any body, let them wear it.*

Secondly, Sir, I declare my ſelf, if of any Party, I am, and ever was for the *English* Liberty, and for the putting ſuch Men into the Magiſtracy, who, in Concurrence with the King, our Supreme Magiſtrate, wou'd protect and preſerve that Liberty. And, as a Perſon every way qualified to execute a Truſt of ſo much Honour, whether profitable or not, I won't examine, I gave my Vote for Sir *Thomas Abney*, and ſhou'd ha' done ſo, if I had the Power of Ten Thouſand Voices ; and no Man has more Reſpect for, or Opinion of his Honesty and Ability than my ſelf : Nor have I, God be thank'd, any Occaſion to ſay this to flatter him ; *for I neither want his Favour, nor fear his Anger.*

Herein therefore I preſume to ſay you have been entirely miſtaken ; and theſe Errors have led you to waſte your Time, and the Reader's too, in making needleſs Remarks, and Answering thoſe people who never Oppos'd you.

I come now to that part of your Book which reſpects the Caſe in hand ; which, as it is the leaſt part, and indeed ſeems to agree with the Title, that it is only a *Conſideration* of the Preface ; *for really,*

with submission, there is very little Answer to the Fact: So it requires not that I shou'd Reply to the Argument; for I see none, but that drawing back the Curtain which you have spread over the Subject, I shou'd set it in a True Light, that all Men may judge by their own Consciences, and the Scripture-Rule, and take care they be not distinguish'd out of their Reason and Religion by the Cunning and Artifice of Words.

Please therefore, Sir, to admit me to run over your Book with as modest Animadversions as my just Defence will allow; and I am content to stand Corrected, where I fail in point of Decency.

First, You quarrel with me for a "*Breach of Kindness and Equity, in hiding my own Name, and Revealing yours. Designing my self to fight in the Dark, and expecting you to do it in open Light.*" And you give us Five whole Pages, including the Quotation of your self in your Preface to the Inhabitants of *Tor-rington*, to show your Indifferency in Controverted Disputes, and consequently your Unwillingness to engage in this.

Truly, Sir, as to the First, I thought a publick Appeal to you, who are a publick Person, had been no Sin against Kindness or Equity; if it be, I ask your Pardon.

As to my Concealing my Name, I have given you my Reasons already; and as to my Exposing yours, had you thought fit to have Replied to the

Book

Book which lay Three years unanswer'd, without being address'd to any person in particular, you had been at Liberty to have remain'd as unexpos'd as the Author.

But the Enquiry being unanswer'd, gave some people more prejudice against the Integrity of Dissenters in general, than I cou'd wish to have found; upon which I thought it necessary to have the Matter discuss'd, if possible; and knew no Man more concern'd to do it, *nor more capable than your self.*

Nor is your Answering me such a Disappointment as you are pleas'd to mention; but that you shou'd attempt it, and do it to no more purpose, is, I confess, more Disappointment to me than any thing I cou'd ha' met with.

Whether, Sir, the Indifferency you are so pleas'd with in your Temper, be Congruous to your Profession as a *Gospel Minister*, I shall not examine: Whether you that are Pastor of a Dissenting-Church, and Administer the Ordinances of Christ to a Select People, in a way Dissenting from the Establish'd Church, and thereby maintain a Schism in the said Establish'd Church, ought to be so indifferent as to boast that you never persuaded any Man to Conform, or not to Conform, I leave it to your self to consider; I am sure, if I was arriv'd to that Coldness in the matter my self, I wou'd Conform immediately; for I think what I affirm'd in the

Enquiry,

Enquiry, Page . remains a Truth unanswer'd by you : " *That Schism from a True Establish'd Church of Christ, is a great Sin ; and if I can Conform, I ought to Conform.*

From this Declaration of your own Indifferency to meddle in Matters of Controversy, with your Reasons for it, which I suppose you wou'd have taken as Introductory to what follows, you are pleas'd to proceed *very angrily* to examine why I engage you in this quarrel : I have given you an account of it already with all the honesty and plainness I can ; and I thought a person in your Place wou'd never have Resented the being put upon the Defence of his Profession, or being civilly ask'd a Question about it ; and I cannot but observe how carefully you avoid, being engag'd in the present Dispute.

I ought to have been well assur'd, you say,
(1.) *That you did advise one way or the other ; Or,*
(2.) *That you ought to have done so.*

Really, Sir, I think it immaterial whether you were, or no ; or, whether you ought, or no ; for I never Charg'd you with the first, or affirm'd the last ; but only ask'd this fair Question :

Whether it was allow'd by Dissenters in general, or by your Congregation in particular ? To which Question you give no Answer.

But I shall answer you honestly and directly : I am assur'd, as far as Rationally I can be, by Consequences of things, *that you have not advised one way*

way or other : Nor do I affirm you ought to have done so, unless the person concern'd, applied to you for Advice in point of Conscience on the Case; if he did, I do not see how you could decline it. So that to me, it seems, you either were oblig'd, or not oblig'd, as the Application of the person concern'd might alter the Case; I do not say you were oblig'd officiously to tender your Advice in the Case : *If I am wrong here, I shall acknowledge my Error when I am better inform'd.*

The next thing will come close to the Point; Whether it be a *Fault*, an *unlawful Action*, or no, for a Dissenter, *as such*, to hold Occasional Communion with the Establish'd Church, and, at the same time, continue in, or return to his Relative Conjunction with a Separate Church?

That it is not a sinful Act simply to have Communion with the Establish'd Church, I willingly agree. But since on this Point depends the Weight of our present Dispute, I must conclude, That I think 'tis a sinful Act Circumstantially and Con-junctively.

And because I wou'd be rightly understood, I shall endeavour to be Explicit, though I run the hazard of being counted impertinent.

I have laid down the Case, I thought, fairly, and of which you are pleas'd to take no notice, in the *Enquiry*, Page 12.

“ He who Dissents from an Establish’d Church from
 “ any other Reasons but such as these ; That he re-
 “ ally believes the said Establish’d Church is not of the
 “ purest Institution, but that he can serve God in a Form
 “ more agreeable to his Will ; and that accordingly ’tis
 “ his Duty to do it so, and no otherwise : Such a one
 “ ought to Conform, because to make a Wilful Schism in
 “ the Church, is doubtless a great Sin ; and if I can
 “ avoid it, I ought to avoid it.

If then I am guided by this real Principle of Conscience to Dissent, how can I Conform without Sinning against that Conscience, by which only my Dissenting is made Lawful ?

And thus, Sir, I am brought to my Argument again : Of which I shall give you this short Abstract ; and you, or any body else, are welcome to be angry with me, if you will be pleas’d first to Answer it :

That he who Dissents from the Establish’d Church, except from a true Principle of Conscience, is guilty of a great Sin.

That he who Conforms to the Establish’d Church against his Conscience, is guilty of a great Sin.

That he who both Dissents and Conforms at the same time and in the same Point of Religion, must be guilty of one of these great Sins.

That he who has committed either of these Sins, ought not to be receiv’d again on either side on any other Terms than as a Penitent.

I do

I do not examine, as I hinted then, whether the Gentleman you would embroil me with, be thus guilty; *be that to himself.*

But I must now come to your Distinctions: Indeed, Sir, I believe as you say, that taking which side you will, you may puzzle the most of plain people, who are but of ordinary Understandings in the Controversy about Ceremonies: And give me leave to add, That such is the Subtilty and Nicety of Sophistical Reasonings, that Men may almost Distinguish themselves into, and out of any Opinion; and some People, who are Masters of the Art of Nice Arguing, too often lose both Themselves and their Religion in the Labyrinths of Words: *School Divinity and Practical Christianity are Two things, and seldom understood by the same Heads.*

But, Sir, with the greatest Respect, and some Concern, let me tell you, I did not think to find all the Difference between the Dissenters and the Church of England dwindle'd into *Three additional Appendices, in which we have some Difference, and so:* and this from Mr. How, who is Pastor of a Separate Church.

If we differ from them in Trifles, or have but a Trifling Difference, I think we can never justify making so large a Chasm in the Church; we have much to answer for, without question, in the too fatal Divisions of this Nation, if it has all been occasion'd by a few small Appendices.

If our Differences are not Matters of Conscience, I have no more to say; if they are, 'tis a Mystery yet hidden from the Common Understandings, how they can be first insisted on from a Principle of Conscience, and then wav'd without acting against that Conscience, which only could justify the first insisting on them: If you can Distinguish us into this, I am mistaken.

I allow your Distinctions of Sins, which are Consistent or Inconsistent with the Christian State to be Orthodox and Right.

I allow your Distinctions of Negative and Affirmative Precepts, and, according to my weak Talent, agree with you in them.

But the Consequence you draw, with submission, does not reach the Case; which is, That scrupulous Persons ought to be fully persuaded in their own Minds; and Fellow-Christians were not to Judge, but to Receive them.

This you have answer'd your self, P. 13. to be meant in dubious and small Matters: And if we must stick here, we are next to Examine, Whether the Difference between Us and the Establish'd Church be only in dubious and small Matters; if it be, I know not how we shall Ward off the Blow of being guilty of Schism; the Sin of which I suppose you will not dispute. Wherefore to descend to some Particulars. If I know why we Dissent
from

from the Establish'd Church, 'tis principally on such accounts as these.

1. On account of the Episcopal
* Hierarchy, Prelatical Ordination
and Super-intendency.

* Clarkson's *No-
Scripture - Evidence
for Diocesan Bishops.*

2. On account of their imposing things own'd
to be indifferent, as Terms of Communion.

3. On account of their imposing things own'd
to be otherwise indifferent, as made necessary by
the Command of the Civil Magistrate.

As to Partial Conformity, Dissenting in some
things, and Conforming in others, which you men-
tion *Page* . it does not seem to concern this Case.
No Man among the Dissenters, I believe, pretend-
ed to Dissent in every thing; but we are speaking
of Conforming in those very Points in which we
Dissent, and that no less than the *Article of Com-
munion*.

If these are your small things, I am content to
stand by it, and ready to prove, as I said in the
Enquiry :

That whoever Separates from this Church, and
at the same time Conforms to it; by Conforming,
denies his Dissent being Lawful; or, by his Dissent-
ing, Damns his Conforming as Sinful.

All this, Sir, you have not thought fit to touch upon, for Reasons which you know best; and I really wonder you shou'd take so much pains to Cavil at me and a simple Preface, which really was not worth your while; and when you have led your self into the Argument, take no notice of the thing it self, as it is Objected, but Distinguish so nicely about the smaller matters, and omit the greater.

If we differ from the Establish'd Church in small things only, we are to blame to make the Breach so wide: Was it for small and dubious Things only that we suffer'd Process of the Law, Excommunications, Seizures of our Estates, and Imprisonment of our Persons? And since you are pleas'd to bring in that Honourable Gentleman, speaking in the first Person to the Point, as an Inference drawn from your Distinctions, and your self telling us what he may perhaps do;

Give me leave to go through those Supposititious Cases with you, Sir. *As to the particular Person, you concern him in it, not I.*

I. You say, "*He may have Arguments so specious, that supposing he Err, may Impose upon the Judgment, and thereby Direct the Practice of a very Intelligent, Discerning, and Upright-hearted Man, so as to make him think that which is perhaps an Error, his present Duty, and so not offer Violence to his Conscience.*"

I Answer: Admit he does so; yet while you at the same time allow *he Errs*, that is, Sins; why ought not he to be admonished to Repent of that Sin, before he be receiv'd again into Communion? This is what I mean by being receiv'd as a Penitent: You grant (P. 9.) a Man is to do the part of a Penitent for a Fault; and this Error is a Fault, though it were an Error of Ignorance.

2. Then you say, P. 18. "*As judging such a Church true as to Essentials, he may think (Occasion inviting) he hath greater Reason, though it be Defective in Accidents, to Communicate with it sometimes, than to shun its Communion always.*"

Pardon me, Sir, I must say this seems a Sophism in Religion; for allow he may think so, you must allow he ought not to think so. And why *Occasion inviting*? why not *Occasion compelling*? 'Tis manifest, Force cou'd not *compel*, why shou'd *Occasion invite*?

I confine not my Argument to this Gentleman; but of Others I can prove, That Force cou'd not *compel* them, but *Occasion*, that is, Honour and Preferment cou'd *invite* them. Now if you please to Reconcile this for me, I shall be gotten over one Point; Whether a Man can justify suffering to the Ruin, perhaps of his Family, rather than comply with that which he may do without imposing upon his Conscience, and which, *Occasion inviting*, he may judge lawful?

You.

7. You have another Distinction which, I confess, I hardly think to be Rational, that is, Unprofitable Preferment, Page . First, I neither understand that the Instance you are upon is Unprofitable, nor believe it; nor that the Epethite can be proper to the word; for that which is Unprofitable, cannot be a Preferment.

I must also observe here, Sir, that the Conformity exacted in the late Reigns, was not so large as what these Gentlemen are pleas'd to comply with voluntarily. Now as to the Ceremonies you insist on, and which indeed I do not, as the way of Administration, Kneeling, &c. it was allow'd to be so indifferent then, that many receiv'd in the Church Standing. But when these Unprofitable Preferments, as you please to call them, invite, they seek of themselves what before they cou'd not be forc'd to.

3. You ask us another Question: "*What if some have thought that alone a sufficient Reason for their Occasional Communion with a Church, with whom they have not constant Communion, That they may testify to the World they Decline it not as no Church, but so far practically own it as the Reason of the thing requires; may they not be supposed to do this, as thinking it a good Reason, whether it be so or no, without going against Conscience herein?*"

Truly, Sir, I must suppose these *It may be's*, and *Why may not's*, are put in to make out what you said

Page 18. that you cou'd puzzle a mean Understanding both ways ; and, I thank God, you are driven to the Necessity of these Arts. But to let you see these Suppositions may be replied to ;

1. Sir, the Church of *England* however, must own Her self very much oblig'd to such Gentlemen who will Conform only to Vindicate her Reputation.

2. They may be supposed to do thus, but they cannot be supposed to do so without a manifest gross Ignorance, and taking that for a good Reason which is none at all : For, if, Sir, you will admit that a Man is in the Right as to himself, while he thinks he is so, then you open the way to the fatal Latitude of all manner of Error ; for no Man is guilty of an Error, as an Error, but as his Judgment may be perverted to believe himself right, when he is wrong.

Page 19. you are pleas'd to Object for me :
 “ Since, Sir, you think it not unlawful to Communicate
 “ with such a Church sometimes, why shou'd you not (for
 “ Common Order-sake) do it always ?

Sir, if you please to give me leave to ask Questions for my self, I wou'd state it something more fairly to the Case in hand, thus : Since, Sir, you think it not Unlawful to Communicate with such a Church sometimes, why shou'd you not, to avoid the just Imputation of Schism, which is a great Sin, have done it always ? And why never do

it, but when upon an Occasion of Preferment inviting, you find it necessary to protect you from the Penalty of the Law?

I shou'd ha' been very glad you had stated this Question fully, and suppose what Answer you please; for, *upon my word, I can suppose none*, unless I wou'd bring him in, owning the Crime, and repenting of it; which I shou'd be glad to hear of.

What you say, I shall stare at, Page 20. “ *I will-
“ lingly admit, that what is simply best, may not be best for
“ Practice in present Circumstances.* And I must likewise remind you, Sir, That what may be simply Lawful, may be unlawful Circumstantially: And so I affirm this to be, and dare undertake to prove it so, without coming into the Number of Solomon's Fools, with whom you have rank'd me for *proposing hastily beyond Seven Men that can render a Reason.*

Here, Sir, *viz.* at your 20th Page; I must leave you to Combat with the *Independents*, and let them answer for themselves; I am not at all concern'd in the Quarrel.

And you spend three or four Pages as an Advocate for the Church of *England*, concerning Modes and Gestures; in which, I am sure, I am far from placing the least Weight, where serious Christianity is to be found; and God forbid either you or I, Sir, shou'd be found making a Rent in the Christian Union of this Church and Nation, if their Kneeling

ing at the Sacrament, or the Use of a Liturgy, were all the Dispute; 'tis you have led me into saying any thing of the Difference between the National Church and the Dissenters.

I know that the *Apostles* of the Primitive Church included the Forms of their Administrations and Publick Services; and need not recite my Authorities for it to you, who know it better than I; nor that they are found in the Time of *Tertullian*, and long before him. But I know also, and the contrary has never been prov'd, that those Forms were not impos'd as Terms of Communion, and under the Penalty of Laws, at least till the Divisions of the Church between the *Arians* and the Orthodox, when Error and Persecution got into the Church, and the Evil Spirit reign'd, to the Destruction of both sides.

And now, Sir, I find you no more talking to me till you come to *Page 25*. where you are pleas'd to Satyrize upon my Title and Preface.

Really, Sir, I believe my self capable to Defend my Book against all that the Power of Cavil and Sophistry can suggest; and therefore I am not solicitous for my Preface and Title-page.

But that I may satisfy your Request; and telling you first, that you oblige me to it: I shall be plain.

" You desire me to examine my own heart, what I
" meant by that suggestion? In Cases of Preferment,

“ mentioned in the Title; was it not to Insinuate, that Preferment was the Inducement to that Worthy Person to act against his Conscience?

Sir, Will you be pleased to Examine your own Reason, how that can be, when the Words were printed Three years before the Fact; and I appeal to God and the World, whether you have not wrongfully Judg'd me then. But to make it more plain:

I do not say he, or any body else, does it for Preferment; you are pleas'd strangely to mistake me: I say, they may have the Preferment without it.

'Tis done to save their Money, to save the Five hundred Pounds, which is the Penalty of the Act: I am sorry you have not read the Book before you ventur'd to make so severe a Remark. For your better Information therefore, Sir, I refer you to P. 19. in the Enquiry, where my Words are plain.

As to the Worthy Gentleman, whose Cause you would have this to be; you say this has been his known Judgment and Practice several years.

Tho' it were true, yet, Sir, this is no Argument to prove the thing lawful, or to prove that it is not practis'd, even in every part that I have laid down, by others before him, and like to be so after him; it only quits him of doing it against his Conscience, to qualify himself for the unprofitable Preferment you mention: and this I never Charg'd him with.

That he has done the Fact, no body Disputes; but that he did it against his Conscience, I never alludg'd;

alleg'd ; you put that upon me , Sir , unjustly : Be his Conscience to God and himself , I know better than to judge him , nor can you without a Breach of Charity suggest it of me.

Nor do I any-where say that others have acted against their Consciences that do so ; possibly they may , by the help of *nice Distinguishing* , Reason themselves into a Belief of their being in the Right.

But the Point in Debate is , Whether , *whatever their Opinions may be in the Case* , the Act it self be not , as I have said , Circumstantially sinful : For I hope you will grant me they are never the more in the Right for its being their Opinion ; Truth is always unmov'd , sullen , and the same , whatever Gloss our Fancy or Interest puts upon it.

But since you will have it be this Gentleman's practice , which I think no Reputation to him , nor Defence of the Practice : Nor do I think you or he can justify your Dissenting from the Church of *England* , and that Practice together : Since , I say , you will have it be that Gentleman's practice ; all you gain by that in point of Argument , is , That he did not do it against his Conscience , nor to serve the present Turn . And what then ? I affirm to you , I neither meant him , nor any Man else , but him that is Guilty ; and I meant him , and every body else , if they are guilty . And what is all this to the purpose ? The Question is not here ,

Who is, or is not guilty of it; but whether the thing in its own Nature, aggravated with the Circumstances of Turn and Return, timed for Preferment, with all the black *Et cetera's* of it, as 'tis lately practic'd, and as I have laid it down, be a Crime, or no?

If this Gentleman you *would Embroil me with*, did formerly live in a general, or ordinary Communion, both with the Church of *England*, and a private Congregation, before either the Preferments I mention invited, or the Penalty of the Law forced him to it; Then he stands clear of this part of the Charge, That he did it for the Protection of his Interest; but still the Matter of Fact is true.

Thus, Sir, I have said what I thought my self oblig'd to by way of Reply to your Considerations: And as to your severe Censures, tho' I have a great Opinion of your Charity, however you seem to be out of Temper in this Case; yet I appeal from your Judgment, to the Judgment of Truth; and waving all your puzzling Distinctions, which my Respect for your Person and Character, will not permit me to Descant upon; give me leave to make this short Conclusion.

Sincerity is the Glory of a Christian; the Native Lustre of an honest Heart is impossible to be hid; 'twill shine through all his Life in one Action or another, in spite of Scandal; and it wants no Artifice to set it out.

If the Practice we Discourse of be to be Defended, *let it be a Practice*; I mean, let it be Voluntary, let it be Free and Spontaneous; and if Gentlemen, who have such a Latitude in their Opinions, wou'd not have it thought they are mov'd to it by their Interests, let them practice it openly, and not Time it so to the very *Eve* of an Election, as to have it speak of it self, and, as it were, force Men to believe it done on purpose; nay, let them not put such a Reproach in the Mouths of their Enemies, as to have it spoken in Contempt, with Circumstances that stop the Mouths of Argument, and are as Convincing as Demonstration.

You have given your Blessing to them at the Conclusion of your Book, with a *Let them go on and prosper*. I wish you have not spoken Peace where there is no Peace: As to its being a *Secret between God and Them*; I shall only say, *Enter not into their Secret, O my Soul!* 'Tis an *Arcana* that is hidden from my Eyes; and I doubt very much how it can consist with Consulting the Rule with the serious Diligence you recommend: For certainly were the great Christian Rule consulted, it wou'd instruct them, that the Profession of the Christian Religion is not a thing, the Forms whereof are of such Indifference, as you seem to make it; that 'tis not a light thing to shift and change Communion with an Establish'd, and with a Separate Church, as often as Convenience, or Reason of State, or Interest, invite.

And

And whether I set my Name to this, or no ? Whether I am an *Independent* ? *I hope they are Christians too as well as other folks.* Whether I am a *Fifth-Monarchy-man* ? Whether the Book was design'd against my Lord Mayor, *tho' 'twas wrote Three years before he was Chosen* ? Or, whether any thing else you Censoriously Charge me with be true, or no, seems to me not worth your while to Examine ? Since if I shou'd grant them all, the Argument of Occasional Conformity remains untouch'd.

If the Truth be made the worse for my Temper, I am sorry for it : But this is another of Mr. *Haw's* Paradoxes, and something like your *Unprofitable Preferment*, that Truth, tho' it be mix'd with the worst Temper in the World, shou'd thereby be so debased, as to become worse than Error.

Sir, I had ended here, but for a Clause you force me to Reply to, concerning the Old *Puritans*, who you tax me with abusing : Indeed 'twas as remote from my Thoughts, as 'twas, that ever it was possible you cou'd treat an Adversary with such Language.

And, but that I shall not suffer my self to be transported beyond the Bounds of Civility, and so fall into your Error, I could allow my self to be very much mov'd, That such a Man as you should venture to Charge me with what is neither true in Fact, nor can be suggested by Consequence from any thing I have wrote : And, Sir, you must give
me

me leave to say, I am sorry you shou'd lay your self so open, and force me to so severe a Remark.

You are pleas'd to affirm, That I industriously represent the Primitive *English* Puritans, as if they were generally of my *stingy, narrow* Spirit.

And here you run upon me with ill Language, *How I could think to Impose upon the World in a matter of so recent Memory*; and, *How I could have the Confidence*, &c. This is really a new sort of Stile from Mr. *How*.

Sir, I have industriously examin'd the Book I wrote; and, as I am sure I never entertain'd a Thought in prejudice of the best Character which can be given those Primitive Reformers; so I cannot find one word in the whole Book which can, no, not with the help of an *Inuendo*, be so much as pretended to look that way.

Wherefore, Sir, unless you can make it out, or, by the help of some of your Distinctions, come off from it; I hope you will do me so much Justice, as you are a Man of Truth and Honesty, to recant the Scandal, and acknowledge your self mistaken.

And that I may leave it to every body to judge, whether I have not just Ground for what I say; I shall quote here all that I have said relating to the *Puritans*, and impartially lay down the Matter of Fact.

After I had given a short Abridgment of our Reformation, and Recited the Controversy between

tween Bishop Ridley and Bishop Hooper, I proceeded thus, Page the 6th. *“ When Queen Elizabeth Restored the Protestant Religion, and the Church enjoy’d its Peace again, the Debate reviv’d: But the first Establishment of King Edward, obtain’d so on the Minds of Men, that the farther Reformation was rejected: The other Party being not at all Convinc’d, tho’ Over rul’d, submitted their Persons to the Laws, but not their Opinions; affirming, That it was the Duty of every Christian to endeavour to serve God with the greatest Purity of Worship as was possible; and that this was the purest Worship which came nearest the Divine Institution, which they believed the Establish’d Liturgy did not; and therefore in Conscience they must be Dissenters.*

Having made this Quotation, which I have sufficient Authority to prove genuine, from a Manuscript of a famous Man in those days, which I have seen, and on occasion am ready to produce; I go on thus:

“ It must be own’d, that the Original Authors of these Disputes were Learned, Devout, and Singularly Pious, strict in Conversation to Excess, if that were possible; and from thence, in a sort of happy Derision, were call’d Puritans: Of whom I shall say nothing, but leave for a Record the last Speech of a famous Foreigner;

Sit anima mea, cum Puritannis Anglicanis.

This

[5]

This is all the Words that have the least Retro-
spect on the Puritans ; unless you will pretend
that a few words, Page 24. is meant of them,
which no Man can have any Colour of Reason
for : But lest that shou'd be pretended, I shall quote
them also , Page 24.

“ *The Dissenters can never pretend to be Dissenters*
“ *upon the meer Principle of Purity of Worship, as I have*
“ *related in the beginning of this Discourse ; if such shall*
“ *be receiv'd as blameless into their Communion, who have*
“ *Deserted them upon occasion of Preferment.*

This refers back to Page 12. where, I say, I shall
give my Essay as to what I understand a real Dis-
senting Protestant is ; nor can it refer to any other
place : But if you shou'd still say it looks back to the
Puritans, 'twou'd puzzle a better Head than mine
to find out a Reflection on them in it.

But this is not the only thing in which you are
pleas'd to injure both me and the Truth : For,
Page 28. you tell me with some Heat too, “ *That*
“ *throughout my Book, such as are not so stingily (your*
“ *Favourite-word, Sir) bigotted to a Party, as I,*
are treated with this sort of Charity, to be stil'd
“ *Painted Hypocrites, such as play Bo-peep with God Al-*
“ *mighty ; That if such an Occasion offer it self to any*
“ *of them to serve God and their Country in a publick*
“ *Station ; do what the Law requires, and which they*
“ *think they may sinlesly do in order to it ; do trespass*
“ *upon their Consciences, and Damn their Souls to save*
“ *their Countries.*

Sir, for God-sake, how came you to let your Passion thus out-run your Memory ?

There is not one word of all this true ; pardon me that I am oblig'd in my own Defence to say so ; I refer you to the Original to convince your self of it, and I'll take the pains to go along with you in the Examination.

First, As to painted Hypocrites, 'tis spoken of the whole Body of Protestants in England, in *hæc Verba*.

P. 8. " I must acknowledge it fares with the Church of
" England, and with Dissenters both, as it has always
" far'd with Christ's Church in the whole World ; that
" while suppress'd and persecuted, their Professors were
" few, and their Profession more severe : But when Re-
" ligion comes to be the Mode of a Country, so many
" painted Hypocrites, there's the word, get into
" the Church, that Guile is not to be seen till it arrive to
" Apostacy.

Pray, Sir, who can these painted Hypocrites refer to, that you should say, *Inuendo*, All those that are not of my Party, or that are not so stingy as I ?

These painted Hypocrites must belong to that Religion which is the Mode of the Country ; which must rather mean the Church of England than the Dissenters ; and yet if I meant either of them, it cannot be made a Reflection, because 'tis confin'd only to such as are Apostates from Religion, not such as continue to Conform to both or either of them.

This is Judging me indeed neither with Charity nor Truth : The next Words are, *Such as play Bo-peep*

peep with God Almighty. Pray, good Sir, reflect on Solomon, and what is said of such as judge of a Matter before they hear it: I am persuaded you did not read the Clause; which is thus:

I had been Examining the woful Excuse of some people, and *too many such we had*, who wou'd take the Sacrament at the Church, and pretend 'twas done only as a Civil Action; on which I made such Remarks as, I think, so prophane a Practice deserv'd; and at last added, *This is playing Bo-peep with God Almighty.*

And, pray Sir, if I may be so free with you, do but examine the Circumstance as I have laid it down, and tell me from the Sincerity of your Soul, *if you are not of the same mind.*

The other Reflection is on such, who, tho' it be against their Consciences, pretend tis to serve their Country: Of these, I say, "*They are Patriots indeed, who will Damn their Souls to save their Country:*" Not that thereby I imply, that to take the Sacrament with the Church of *England*, wou'd Damn any man's Soul, if he Communicated with a right Principle; but to do it to serve a Turn, which is the Question in hand, I won't answer for, tho' it were Inverted from the Church to a Dissenting Congregation.

All these Instances, Sir, and more which I could reckon up, serve to make me admire wherein I have so provok'd you, as to remove you from your wonted Candor: And since my Writing on a Cause, which

which I expected fairer Quarter in, so Exceedingly moves you, I shall chuse rather to lay down the Controversy, than to Engage with a person, who, I shou'd be very much concern'd to see exceed the Rules which he has with so much Success, and with so much Applause prescrib'd to others.

I always thought Men might Dispute without Railing, and Differ without Quarrelling; and that Opinions need not affect our Tempers: But since it is not to be found, I leave it to those who have a better Talent that way than I.

P O S T S C R I P T.

Besides your Book, Sir, which I think treats me *Courtsly enough*; I am, since that, threatned to be worse us'd by a Gentleman who thinks himself concern'd in my affronting you, *as he calls it*.

I assure you, Sir, I do not Charge you with any part of it; I believe you to be more of a *Christian*, and more of a *Gentleman*; nor am I sensible I gave you any affront; *I am sure I intended you none*.

But because that Gentleman, I understand, expects some Answer this way, I have this to say to him;

That if he thinks himself capable to give me Personal Correction, he knows me well enough, and need never want an Opportunity to be Welcome.

D. F.

F I N I S.









